

PATENT

Case No. 03003

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**APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY**

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**FOR:
CUSTOMIZABLE FASHION BELT**

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SPECIFICATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN that ROBERT D. MARKS, a citizen of the United States and a resident
5 of INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, U.S.A. has invented a new

CUSTOMIZABLE FASHION BELT

and does hereby declare that the following is a full, clear and exact description, reference being
had to the accompanying drawings and to the numerals of reference marked thereon, which form
a part of this specification.

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CUSTOMIZABLE FASHION BELT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to apparel belts and more particularly to fashion belts utilizing multiple parts for decorative customization.

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Description of the Prior Art

Belt attachment structures allowing attachment of functional elements to belts have been known for quite some time. Many of the prior art belts conceived require functional elements that are specially made to fit the attachment means employed by the belt. Some of these functional attachment belts are disclosed here.

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U.S. Patent No. 5,152,013 issued to Johnson discloses a stabilizing belt comprising a pliable belt, means for securing the band about the waist of the forward person of a tandem pair, and at least two discrete hand grip assemblies for the rearward person of the pair. The hand grip assembly utilizes an anchor member adjustably mounted to the belt to carry a loop of material for hand gripping by the reward person.

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U.S. Patent No. 5,337,935 issued to Chambonnet discloses a belt structure particularly suited for carrying diving equipment having structure for securing a rigid element that further secures equipment such as a compressed air tank.

5 Apparel belts allowing customization to express beliefs or allegiance to a particular organization such as a sports team have also been previously conceived. These prior art belts also require pieces that are specially made to fit the connecting means employed by the belt. Some of these belts are disclosed here.

10 U.S. Patent No. 4,617,685 issued to Grandis discloses an ornamental elasticized fabric belt having a number of ornamental discs or medallions arranged in seriatim about the band. The medallions overlap each other giving a unique and expensive appearance to the belt. As the belt is caused to expand, the medallions are caused to move with respect to each other, thus changing the appearance of the ornamentation.

15 U.S. Patent No. 5,852,829 issued to Relaford discloses an apparel belt with decorative strips which are attachable to the outer side of the belt by a pair of socket elements which engage stud elements located along the length of the belt. The decorative strips are interchangeable and may include different letters or words thereon allowing the wearer to communicate a message.

20 U.S. Patent No. 6,554,680 issued to Abbondandolo discloses action figures having female connections formed on the back and a belt having a plurality of male connectors so that the action figures may be attached to the belt.

Although the belts previously discussed provide means for attaching elements to a belt for functional or aesthetic purposes, the prior art still lacks an attachment structure for belts that accept items that are not specially made for attachment to another item such as a belt. To fulfill
5 this need, the claimed invention provides a clip for retaining preexisting items that may be used to create decorative items such as a fashion belt.

As will be described in greater detail hereinafter, the customizable fashion belt of the claimed invention differs from the previously proposed inventions and employs a number of
10 novel features that render it highly advantageous over the aforementioned prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is a primary object of the claimed invention to provide a clip for holding a frame, such as the canning screw band of a two-piece canning lid used with canning jars, that may be used in
5 the construction of various arts and crafts.

It is another object of the claimed invention to provide a clip for holding a frame that may be linked with other clips to form a chain of frames.

10 It is further object of the claimed invention to provide a customizable fashion belt having a plurality of frames displaying decorative artwork.

To achieve these objects as well as others that will become evident after a reading of this specification and viewing the appended drawings, a customizable fashion belt is provided. The
15 customizable fashion belt generally comprises a belt, a plurality of clips, a plurality of connector pieces and a plurality of frames framing various types of decorative inserts.

The clips comprise a pair of arms, a pair of shoulders, a pair of receiving slots, a bridge portion and a clasp portion. The arms each have a cutaway portion to facilitate easy removal of
20 the frames and have base portions that coact with the shoulders to retain the frame within the clip. The clamp portions of the arms provide a secondary means for retaining the frame within the clip in the event that the frame is unseated from the shoulders. The shoulders are generally shaped to engage the inner walls of the frame and are spaced by the bridge portion such that the

frame seats over the shoulders with a snap fit. The clasp portion forms a second clip that may be used to clip a single clip to another object such as a typical apparel belt. The clip may be used to create other decorative objects such as wall hangings and refrigerator magnets.

5 The frames have at least one side member that frame inserts displayed within the display aperture of the frames. The frames may take the form of canning screw bands used with canning jars giving the fashion belt a unique appearance and provides the additional feature of using a preexisting uniform utilitarian item that 29 million homes already have. A customized fashion belt assembled with canning screw bands provides a fashion accessory with a novel appearance
10 that has not been previously seen.

 When the clips and frames are used to create a customized fashion belt, the belt is placed through the apertures of the connector pieces and the arms of the clips are then placed through the apertures adjacent the belt. Decorative inserts are then assembled within the frames and the
15 frames are then clipped into place within the clips connected to the belt.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1. A perspective view of a fully assembled customized fashion belt.

5 Figure 2. A perspective view of a clip of the claimed invention.

Figure 3. A perspective view of a clip assembled with belt slides.

Figure 4. A side view illustrating assembly of the customizable fashion belt.

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Figure 5. An exploded perspective view of a canning screw band and inserts.

Figure 6. An enlarged perspective view of a canning screw band being assembled in a clip of the customized fashion belt.

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Figure 7. An enlarged perspective view of a section of an assembled customizable fashion belt.

Figure 8. A partial cross sectional view of a canning screw band and inserts engaged with a clip.

20 Figure 9. A perspective view of a fully assembled customized fashion belt worn by a user.

Figure 10. A perspective view of an alternate use for the clip and canning screw band assembly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Turning now to the drawings, Figure 1 shows a preferred embodiment of the customizable fashion belt **10** generally comprising a belt **20**, a plurality of clips **30**, a plurality of connector pieces **40** or belt slides and a plurality of frames **50** shown in the form of canning screw bands framing various types of decorative artwork **60**. The decorative artwork **60** is preferably protected by a transparent cover insert **62**, and backed by a backing insert **64** shown in Figure 5 as a canning lid. The customizable fashion belt **10** allows users to assemble a unique fashion item that displays items of particular interest to the user.

The belt **20** shown in Figures 1 and 9 is a shoe string type belt made of woven fabric. However, it is contemplated that belts of various size, shape and composition may be used to accomplish the objects of the claimed invention. A buckle such as the string lock **66** shown in Figures 1 and 9 may be used to fasten the belt **10** about the waist of a wearer. Figure 10 shows an alternate use for the clip **30** where the clip is attached to a typical apparel belt **70**.

The clip **30** shown in Figures 2 and 3 generally comprises a pair of arms **80**, a pair of shoulders **90**, a pair of receiving slots **100**, a bridge portion **110** and a clasp portion **120**. In a preferred embodiment of the clip **30** where the clip **30** is designed to retain a typical canning screw band **50** that is sized to fit a standard canning jar mouth of about 2 3/8 inches, the overall length of the clip **30** is about 3.818 inches and the overall width is about 0.625 inches with an overall height of about 0.907 inches. The typical cross sectional thickness of the clip **30** is about 0.125 inches.

The arms **80** each have a cutaway portion **130** to facilitate easy removal of the frames or canning screw bands **50** and have base portions **140** that coact with the shoulders **90** to retain the canning screw band **50** within the clip **30**. The base portions **140** of the arms **80** shown in the drawings are spaced about 0.125 inches from the shoulder portions **90** to engage the outer diameter of the canning screw band **50** that is typically about 2.813 inches. The clamp portions **150** of the arms **80** extend over the top face **160** of the canning screw band **50** providing a secondary means for retaining the canning screw band **50** within the clip **30** in the event that the canning screw band **50** is unseated from the shoulders **90**. The clamp portions **150** are spaced at about 0.030 inches above the top face **160** of the canning screw band **50** to allow room for removal of the canning screw band **50** from the clip **30**.

The shoulders **90** are generally shaped to engage the inner threaded walls **170** of the canning screw band **50** and are spaced by the bridge portion **110** such that the canning screw bands **50** seat over the shoulders **90** with a snap fit. The shoulder portions **90** of the clip **30** shown in the drawings are spaced at about 2.656 inches apart to engage the inner walls **170** of the canning screw band **50** with a typical inner diameter of about 2.75 inches.

The receiving slots **100** are sized and shaped to receive portions **175** of the belt slides **40** that link two or more clips **30** together. The receiving slots **100** shown in the drawings are about 0.813 inches wide.

The clasp portion **120** extends generally parallel with the bridge portion **110** forming a second clip that may be used to clip a single clip **30** to another object such as a typical apparel belt **70** as shown in Figure 10. The clasp arm **180** shown in the drawings is about 1.781 inches long creating an opening **190** of about 0.625 inches.

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The connector pieces or belt slides **40** are used to link two or more of the clips **30** together when a plurality of clips **30** are used to create different items such as the customizable fashion belt **10** shown in Figures 1 and 9. The overall width of the belt slide **40** is about 0.938 inches. Each belt slide **40** has a pair of apertures **200** that are each sized and shaped to receive the belt **20** and an arm **80** of the clip **30**. The apertures **200** shown in the drawings are about 0.625 inches by 0.25 inches. A portion of the belt slides **175** fit within the receiving slots **100** of the clip **30** as shown in Figure 3.

The frames **50** have at least one side member that frame inserts **60**, **62** and **64** displayed within the display aperture **210** of the frames **50**. The frames **50** shown in Figure 1 are in the form of canning screw bands **50** designed to fit a canning jar with a 2 3/8 inch open mouth. However, it is contemplated that frames of various size, shape and composition may be used to accomplish the objects of the claimed invention. The canning screw bands **50** shown in Figures 1 and 5-10 have a generally circular sidewall **220** with a right angled cross section **230** as shown in Figure 8.

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The inserts shown in Figures 5 and 8 preferably comprise a protective transparent cover insert **62**, a decorative insert **60** such as a picture of a popular celebrity and a backing insert **64**.

The backing insert **64** shown in Figures 5 and 8 is a canning lid. However, it is contemplated that backing inserts of various size, shape and composition may be used to accomplish the objects of the invention, particularly when other types of frames **50** are utilized.

5 The customizable fashion belt **10** shown in Figures 1 and 9 is assembled by first inserting the belt **20** through the apertures **200** of the slides **40** and then inserting the arms **80** of the clips **30** within the apertures **200** of the slides **40** adjacent the belt **20** as shown in Figure 4. The inserts **60**, **62** and **64** are then placed in the canning screw band **50** as shown in Figure 5 with the protective transparent cover insert **62** first, the decorative insert **60** second and the canning lid
10 backing insert **64** last. The assembled frame **240** is then placed in the clip **30** as shown in Figures 6 and 7 so that the shoulders **90** of the clip **30** hold the inserts **60**, **62** and **64** against the inner surfaces **170** of the canning screw band **50** as shown in Figure 8. This process is repeated with each frame **240** until all of the clips **30** have been filled. The resulting customized fashion belt **10** can then be worn around the waist as shown in Figure 9.

15 The clip **30** of the claimed invention can also be used in many other applications such as a single decorative charm holder **250** that may be attached to an ordinary apparel belt **70** shown in Figure 10, or may be used as a refrigerator magnet or wall hanging.

20 Although the invention has been described by reference to some embodiments it is not intended that the novel device be limited thereby, but that modifications thereof are intended to be included as falling within the broad scope and spirit of the foregoing disclosure, the following claims and the appended drawings.